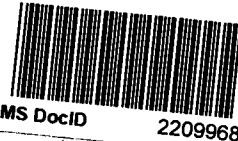


UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

ORIGINAL



SUBJECT: Potential EPA Removal Program Involvement in Elkton Farm Firehole Site

DATE: 1/05/05

FROM: Lorie Baker 
Brownfields and Site Assessment Section (3HS34)

TO: Jim McCreary, Chief
Brownfields and Site Assessment Section (3HS34)

The purpose of this memo is to alert you to a situation at the Elkton Farm Firehole site which may require some involvement from our removal program. The Elkton Farm Firehole site is located two miles northwest of Elkton, Maryland and occupies approximately 32 acres of the actual 400-acre Elkton Farm property. During the decade before and during World War II, the parcel had been the site of activity related to the manufacture of fireworks and munitions. Through a number of geophysical and sampling investigations, MDE has determined the existence of a number of "fireholes" throughout this 32-acre property which were used to burn and dispose waste explosive material from Triumph Explosives, Inc. (TEI). The site is currently used to grow crops, mainly soybeans and corn. There are extensive patches of land on which nothing has grown since the 1950s.

Based on previous sampling, elevated levels of explosive compounds, (mainly TNT and its by-products) have been found in surface and subsurface samples at the site. The most recent investigation of the property occurred in December of 2004 when a remote geoprobe sampler was used to obtain information regarding waste material at depth. This sampling effort was put on hold due to technical difficulties; however, three samples were taken and sent to the laboratory for analysis. Sample results have not yet been received. MDE did note a distinct layer of vitrified material at approx. 18" below the earth's surface, just below the plow line and also found some detonators and remnants of 20 mm shells.

At this point in time, although the fireholes were mainly used during WWII when the TEI facility was under contract with DOD to produce munitions, the Army Corps of Engineers does not consider the Firehole a FUDs site and only considers DOD as a potential responsible party. Therefore, if a removal is necessary, the Corps would not be the lead Agency. Additionally, there is a high potential for this farm to be developed into private residences.

During the week of January 10, 2005, MDE will again be at the site performing extensive geoprobe testing of the fireholes. I would like to request someone from the EPA removal program to be present at the site to observe the borings and to help determine whether the EPA Removal Response and/or Enforcement Sections should become involved at this site. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 4-3355.

